UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

ACC

Administrative Committee on Coordination

ACC/1998/8
19 February 1998

ENGLISH ONLY

INTER-AGENCY COMMITTEE ON
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

REPORT OF THE ACC SUBCOMMITTEE ON OCEANS AND COASTAL AREAS ON ITS SIXTH SESSION

(Lisbon, 20-23 January 1998)

CONTENTS

		Paragraphs	Page
I.	MATTERS BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE INTER-AGENCY COMMITTEE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	1	3
II.	SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS	2 - 50	4
	A. Opening of the session	2 - 5	4
	B. Agenda, timetable and documentation	6	5
	C. United Nations ocean atlas	7 - 12	5
	D. International Year of the Ocean, 1998 (IYO)	13 - 27	6
	E. Inter-agency review of implementation planning for the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA)	28 - 34	9
	F. Collaboration between the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) Subcommittees on Oceans and Coastal Areas and on Water Resources	35 - 37	10
	G. Preparation of reports	38 - 45	11
	H. Arrangements for the seventh session including the inter-sessional work plan of the Subcommittee and its methods of work	46 - 47	12
	I. Other matters	48 - 49	13
	J. Adoption of the report	50	13

CONTENTS (continued)

Page

Annexes

I. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS 14

II. AGENDA 15

III. LIST OF DOCUMENTS 16

IV. STATEMENT ON EL NIÑO 17

V. FRAMEWORK FOR AN INTEGRATED REPORT ON THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE OCEAN, 1998 (IYO) 18

VI. ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF THE GPA STEERING COMMITTEE ON TECHNICAL COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE FOR THE GLOBAL PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT FROM LAND-BASED ACTIVITIES 21

I. MATTERS BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE INTER-AGENCY COMMITTEE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

1. The Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas held its sixth session at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Lisbon, Portugal, from 20 to 23 January 1998, and draws to the attention of the Inter-agency Committee on Sustainable Development (IACSD) the following:

(a) In regard to development of the United Nations ocean atlas, the ACC Subcommittee agreed to the presentation of a prototype at EXPO'98 and at other relevant events as planned; confirmed its long-term commitment to the development of a fully fledged Internet version of the United Nations ocean atlas; reiterated its preparedness to consider cooperation in this task with Governments and the private sector; and agreed to further monitor the progress made by this joint project at its forthcoming sessions;

(b) Recognizing the need for improved use of scientific data and information by decision makers in various sectors of society, and taking El Niño as an example, the Subcommittee agreed that a joint effort should be made to help remedy this situation, for example, through a communication forwarded to the Inter-agency Task Force on El Niño as contained in annex IV;

(c) In regard to the International Year of the Ocean, 1998, the Subcommittee agreed that the principles contained in annex V to this report could be used as the framework for an integrated report for assessing its impacts;

(d) In regard to the GPA Steering Committee, a draft document on role and functions was amended in accordance with the discussion, and is contained as annex VI to the present report. The Subcommittee forwards to IACSD the proposals detailed in that annex for its comment and advice. The Subcommittee noted that the first intergovernmental review of the implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA)[1] is planned for the year 2000. However, the meeting felt that it would be most useful if an ad hoc governmental consultation for preliminary review could be convened in conjunction with the seventh session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, for example, via an ad hoc inter-sessional working group;

(e) Bearing in mind the Commission on Sustainable Development work programme for 1999 and its focus on oceans and seas, and as task manager for chapter 17 of Agenda 21,[2] the Subcommittee draws to the attention of IACSD the following proposals:

(i) In accordance with the guidelines used for the sixth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, the Subcommittee suggests that the basic report of 16 pages should be supplemented by three addenda of 10 pages each which might focus on:

a. Implementation of GPA;

b. An overview of results of the International Year of the Ocean, 1998;

c. Collaborative activities of the United Nations system;

(ii) The Subcommittee strongly urges that one of the ad hoc inter-sessional working groups of the Commission on Sustainable Development at its seventh session be devoted to oceans and seas;

(f) The Subcommittee recommends that its next inter-sessional work plan and the draft agenda for its seventh session should include as priority items: United Nations ocean atlas; International Year of the Ocean, 1998; review of implementation planning for GPA; reporting to the Commission on Sustainable Development;

(g) Taking into account its future work plan and the need for continuity in the period 1998-1999 during preparation and presentation of the report of the Secretary-General on oceans and seas, the Subcommittee agreed:

(i) To hold its seventh session during the week of 25 January 1999 at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Marine Environment Laboratory in Monaco;

(ii) That the present Chair and Vice-Chair should continue their functions through 31 December 1999;

(iii) To forecast the need for an informal session, including a joint informal session with the ACC Subcommittee on Water Resources, and tentatively planned such a session for the month of August 1998 in The Hague, hosted by the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP).

II. SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

A. Opening of the session

2. In her opening remarks, the Chairperson expressed appreciation to the Government of Portugal and, in particular, to M. Ruivo, for the arrangements made to host the session. She followed with a brief summary of the work being undertaken by the Subcommittee in response to its mandate with reference to decisions required at the present session, and welcomed new agency representatives.

3. The Chairperson recalled that, based upon a wide range of discussion at its sixth session, the Subcommittee had agreed to a focused inter-sessional work plan as the basis for cooperative action. In each case, the designated lead agency has assumed responsibilities for inter-sessional work and development of products. Such responsibilities are undertaken within the context of previous decisions of the Subcommittee in regard to "Cooperative programme frameworks", within the overall implementation of chapter 17 of Agenda 21. Due reference was made to matters discussed at the 1997 informal meeting of the Subcommittee (Stockholm, 6-8 August 1997) and those discussed at the informal joint meeting

of the Subcommittee and the Subcommittee on Water Resources (Stockholm, 12 and 13 August 1997) especially in regard to enhanced collaboration between the two Subcommittees.

4. Ambassador Rui Quartim Santos, Director-General for Multilateral Affairs, Foreign Ministry of Portugal, gave a welcoming address to the Subcommittee, recalling the commitment and long-standing historic association of Portugal with the ocean in all of its scientific and socio-economic aspects.

5. M. Ruivo, also representing the host Government, welcomed participants, making reference to the important role of the United Nations system in sponsoring International Year of the Ocean, 1998 (IYO) and in supporting related activities following the initiative of Portugal in 1993 to launch the intergovernmental process that had led to the declaration of 1998 as International Year of the Ocean. He informed the meeting that a visit to the site of EXPO'98 would be organized, outside of the Subcommittee session itself, on Wednesday, 21 January, followed by a luncheon discussion with key national and United Nations focal points involved in the activities of the United Nations pavilion. Other opportunities for interface with national authorities and with the Independent World Commission on the Ocean were also forecast.

B. Agenda, timetable and documentation

6. The Secretary presented the draft agenda, documentation and a proposed timetable for the session. The list of participants is contained in annex I; the agenda as adopted in annex II; and the list of documents in annex III.

C. United Nations ocean atlas

7. The representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), as designated lead agency for this activity, presented a status report based upon the third planning meeting for the United Nations ocean atlas which had been held on 19 January 1998 in Lisbon. Although there had been a slow inflow of material for the atlas until 15 December 1997, additional files were recently received and more material was expected to become available before the end of January, the absolute cut-off date for the design of the prototype of the atlas. Software development is under way. The design of the navigation around the atlas, the "storyboarding", will soon be jointly undertaken by Warwick University and the Geodynamics Experimental Ocean Satellite (GEOS), the project managers contracted by FAO. Once this is finished, a prototype master compact disk read-only memory (CD-ROM) will be produced for demonstration at EXPO'98. During the atlas planning meeting, the importance was reiterated of the preparedness of the Portuguese EXPO'98 team with respect to providing for translation of essential texts into Portuguese as well as furnishing assistance in the printing of demo CD-ROMS containing the atlas prototype and its video presentation for distribution at EXPO'98.

8. A storyboard for video presentation of the atlas at EXPO'98, prepared under contract by a consultant, was introduced together with a budget estimate for the

preparation of such a video and subsequently discussed with the organizers of the United Nations Pavilion at EXPO'98.

9. The representative of FAO further reported that a total of $30,000 had been received as cash contributions and/or pledges to the joint trust fund for the atlas from UNEP and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC). In addition, FAO had provided $15,000 for the hiring of a project coordinator and IAEA travel funds of up to $10,000 to the project manager at GEOS. Currently, an unused balance of about $24,000 was still available, plus an allocation of $5,000 within IAEA for atlas-related travel.

10. The ACC Subcommittee welcomed the progress made in preparing the prototype of the atlas and in preparations for its presentation at EXPO'98. This is considered to be a vital and essential step towards the development of a fully fledged United Nations ocean atlas, eventually to be made available on the Internet. The continued support provided by Warwick University and GEOS was noted with appreciation.

11. Agencies confirmed in principle their long-term commitment towards the development of the United Nations ocean atlas, subject to endorsement by their relevant governing bodies. Depending on the success of the prototype version at EXPO'98 and the publicity related to it, negotiations should be reopened with potential partners and donors at government level and from within the private sector, keeping in mind the need for free access to information and databases generated by the United Nations system. To that end, it was proposed that the demo CD should be presented at events such as the sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development and meetings of relevant governing bodies of agencies. Therefore, production of about 5,000 copies of the demo CD for use by agencies was decided, in addition to the 5,000 copies to be produced for distribution to a selected audience at EXPO'98.

12. In summary, the ACC Subcommittee agreed to the presentation of the United Nations ocean atlas prototype at EXPO'98 and at other relevant events as planned; confirmed its long-term commitment to the development of a fully fledged Internet version of the United Nations ocean atlas; reiterated its preparedness with respect to considering cooperation in this task with Governments and the private sector; and agreed to further monitor the progress made by this joint project at its forthcoming sessions.

D. International Year of the Ocean, 1998 (IYO)

13. The representative of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and IOC of UNESCO introduced the item, referring to the reference documents which set forth the present state of the evolving IYO programme as reflected in a printout of the International Year of the Ocean home page, available in English, French and Spanish, for the present time. This presents the background, decisions, objectives, actions, events and, of course, inter-agency cooperation. It is regularly updated. Cross-references to other home pages/Web sites are made. He also recalled several references to IYO opportunities in the report of the Secretary-General on overall progress achieved since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in

protection of the oceans (E/CN.17/1997/2/Add.16) to the Commission on Sustainable Development at its 1997 session.

14. The basic reference document provides a progress report on coverage by the programme of the various sector interests: understanding the ocean; observing the ocean; importance of the ocean for society; managing the ocean. He suggested that this could be a reasonable topical framework within which to present and report on programme implementation during and after IYO.

15. Subcommittee members provided additional information about the programmes dedicated to IYO within their respective agencies. All had very substantial contributions and agreed to provide supplementary information to IOC for inclusion in the home page. The Subcommittee expressed appreciation for the work done by IOC in preparing and maintaining the home page and putting the programme together and agreed to provide further input to IOC on a continuous basis.

16. The representative of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the United Nations Secretariat provided information on action taken by the Secretary-General as follows:

> The Secretary-General has circulated a note verbale to all member States, calling upon States that have not ratified or acceded to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea[3] and the implementing agreements on the provisions of the Convention to do so as soon as possible so as to realize the goal of universal acceptance of the Convention. The Secretary-General has also called upon States that are parties to the Convention, whose national legislation is not in conformity with the provisions of the Convention, to take the necessary action to ensure that their legislation is in line with the Convention. In addition, the Secretary-General has appealed to those States who have made declarations when ratifying or acceding to the Convention that are contrary to its provisions to withdraw or amend such declarations.

17. He also stated that the Ocean Charter, launched by Canada, constitutes a problem since the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea is in reality the United Nations "ocean charter".

18. In relation to the Ocean Charter sponsored through Canada as part of the 1998 IYO efforts, it was emphasized that this is not a legally binding note and is not referred to as a United Nations document. It was noted that the inputs to the home page from member States as well as agencies depended upon their contributions and that action on their part was required. In this respect, the home page is not complete. It was agreed that all should help to make it as complete as possible through regular updating to the IOC secretariat.

19. The joint logo was discussed and it was agreed that it should be used alone or together with the logo of the agency concerned. The Subcommittee expressed its appreciation to the representative of the United Nations and through him to the consultant who had prepared the logo. The official translation of "the International Year of the Ocean" from English into French, Russian and Spanish was provided by the United Nations and distributed.

20. Various representatives, for example, UNEP and UNESCO-IOC, informed about the preparation of stickers, information documents, video presentations, publications and so forth, dedicated to IYO. The representative of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) drew attention to World Meteorological Day (23 March 1998) with a theme (Weather, oceans and human activity) dedicated to IYO.

21. Following an exchange of views, it was agreed that a joint press release from the United Nations was not required presently, but could be more appropriate a little later when activities had been implemented and experiences gained.

22. The Subcommittee reacted positively to the framework presented in the reference documentation. Special reference was made to the El Niño phenomenon and to General Assembly resolution 52/200 entitled "International cooperation to reduce the impact of the El Niño phenomenon", adopted on 18 December 1997. The UNESCO-IOC representative provided information about the Inter-agency Task Force on El Niño established by the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR) secretariat. It was noted that: concerted inter-agency action between IOC and WMO on this subject had been initiated over 20 years ago; the current El Niño had been forecast in 1996; much improved understanding of the ocean-atmosphere interaction has been achieved through the World Climate Research Programme (WCRP) project known as the Tropical Ocean and Global Atmosphere (TOGA) experiment; that systematic observations in the equatorial Pacific are now in place as an operational system part of the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS); similar efforts are being put in place in the Atlantic Ocean. However, it was felt that the information available through these efforts is not being used sufficiently by society for planning, management and mitigation of impacts.

23. The Subcommittee agreed that a joint effort should be made to help remedy this situation, for example, through a communication forwarded to the Inter-agency Task Force on El Niño as contained in annex IV.

24. Reference was made to the IAEA-IOC-UNEP-International Maritime Organization (IMO)-International Commission for Scientific Exploration of the Mediterranean Sea (CIESM) Symposium on Marine Pollution, 5-8 October 1998, in Monaco as an example of an inter-agency effort generated through the Subcommittee, addressing one of the major management-related ocean and coastal area issues. Through the cooperation of several agencies, preparation for the Symposium has reached a much wider part of society than it would have had it been a single-agency undertaking.

25. The Subcommittee exchanged views on reporting regarding support to IYO. It was suggested that the item of the agenda of the fifty-third session of the General Assembly on Oceans and the law of the sea should be used to provide information to Member States, in parallel with the Subcommittee report to IACSD and the reporting of the Subcommittee members to their respective governing bodies.

26. The Subcommittee concluded that the programme for IYO, 1998, is well established; is addressing a wide range of society; is promising to create

increased awareness about the ocean and related issues which will help obtain commitments to adequately address these issues; and that inter-agency cooperation is well reflected.

27. The Subcommittee agreed that the framework presented in the reference documentation could be used as the basis for an integrated report on IYO as contained in annex V to this report.

E. Inter-agency review of implementation planning for the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA)

28. The representative of UNEP presented reference documentation on implementation of GPA, and on the proposed functions of the ACC Subcommittee as the GPA Steering Committee on technical cooperation and assistance.

29. The Subcommittee took note of decision 19/14 A adopted by the UNEP Governing Council at its nineteenth session[4] in which the Governing Council of UNEP invited the Subcommittee, in collaboration with the ACC Subcommittee on Water Resources, to perform the functions of a steering committee on technical cooperation and assistance for GPA (hereinafter referred to as the GPA Steering Committee), including activities related to the clearing house, with representation from regional and international organizations that had primary roles and responsibilities for its implementation.

30. Noting that the invitation of the UNEP Governing Council includes several new considerations, the Subcommittee discussed the implications for its work of responding to that invitation. In regard to the title, functions and representation of the GPA Steering Committee and the work plan and timetable, the following aspects were discussed with the view of clarifying any outstanding matters:

(a) Functions of the ACC Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas as the GPA Steering Committee;

(b) Possible functions of the ACC Subcommittee on Water Resources in collaborating with the ACC Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas (this matter should be discussed and agreed upon with the ACC Subcommittee on Water Resources);

(c) Functions of each United Nations agency with respect to their responsibilities related to GPA implementation;

(d) Functions of regional and international organizations with primary roles in GPA implementation and their representation in the GPA Steering Committee, taking into account ACC guidelines and regulations on such participation.

31. Reference documentation was amended in accordance with the discussion on the above-mentioned issues, as contained as annex VI to the present report. The

Subcommittee forwards to IACSD the proposals detailed in that annex for its comment and advice.

32. On matters dealing with the GPA clearing house, it was noted with concern that although the governing bodies of some organizations (WMO, IAEA and UNESCO-IOC) have already adopted resolutions in support of GPA, two organizations (the World Health Organization (WHO) and IMO) have officially informed UNEP of their inability to take the lead in coordinating the development of the clearing house mechanism with respect to their respective source categories (as described in General Assembly resolution 51/189 in which the Assembly called upon States to take action so as to ensure such efforts) unless additional financial resources are provided.

33. The representative of FAO informed the Subcommittee that, in order to begin the process of examining GPA within his organization, the matter had been referred to the concerned technical unit to ensure that it followed the most appropriate path with regard to its being brought before the FAO Council. He further indicated that it would be premature to say precisely when endorsement might occur. Inasmuch as the Council's agenda for its then impending November 1997 session had already been set, the next occasion during which the matter could be placed before the Council would be its November 1998 session. FAO wished to reiterate its previous assurances that this matter was receiving due attention within the context of the cycle of meetings of its governing bodies. It will keep UNEP informed of its progress in this regard in a timely manner.

34. The Subcommittee noted that the first intergovernmental review of GPA implementation was planned for the year 2000. However, the meeting felt that it would be most useful if an ad hoc governmental consultation for preliminary review could be convened in conjunction with the seventh session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, for example, via an ad hoc inter-sessional working group.

F. Collaboration between the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) Subcommittees on Oceans and Coastal Areas and on Water Resources

35. The Subcommittee took note of the discussions that had taken place at the informal joint meeting of the ACC Subcommittees on Oceans and Coastal Areas and that on Water Resources (Stockholm, 12 and 13 August 1997), the minutes of which were made available as background documentation.

36. The Subcommittee discussed the joint interests of both Subcommittees, mainly related to discussion under the preceding agenda item on GPA and the tentative work plan and timetable.

37. The interest of the Subcommittee in benefiting from the participation in its work of the Subcommittee on Water Resources was reiterated.

G. Preparation of reports

38. In addressing this agenda item, the Subcommittee first reviewed reporting opportunities available to its members which provide a platform by which various matters can be brought to the attention of governmental decision makers. These include the annual report to the General Assembly under the recently renamed and expanded agenda item on oceans and the law of the sea as well as the focus on oceans and seas forecast in the 1999 work programme of the Commission on Sustainable Development; the Subcommittee, as task manager for chapter 17 of Agenda 21, is responsible for preparing input into the report of the Secretary-General on the subject. It was noted that agencies might also present directly to these bodies reports and other information within which the ocean and coastal area components could be highlighted.

39. The representative from the secretariat of the Division for Sustainable Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat presented a preliminary note on preparations for the seventh session of the Commission on Sustainable Development prepared by her as background for discussion of this agenda item. It was noted that information contained therein reflected the current situation and practices which would be reviewed by the new Commission on Sustainable Development Bureau in early May 1998.

40. Recognizing that the preparations for the seventh session of the Commission on Sustainable Development might be adjusted in light of experience at the Commission's sixth session, the Subcommittee nevertheless felt that it was opportune to express its views at the present session regarding how its contribution to the report of the Secretary-General on oceans and seas might be developed.

41. Within this perspective and as task manager for chapter 17 of Agenda 21, the Subcommittee draws to the attention of IACSD the following proposals:

(a) In accordance with the guidelines used for the sixth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, the Subcommittee suggests that the basic report of 16 pages should be supplemented by three addenda of 10 pages each which might focus on:

(i) Implementation of GPA;

(ii) An overview of results of the International Year of the Ocean, 1998;

(iii) Collaborative activities of the United Nations system;

(b) The Subcommittee strongly urges that one of the ad hoc inter-sessional working groups of the Commission on Sustainable Development at its seventh session be devoted to oceans and seas.

42. A suggestion was made that the "overriding" issues of poverty and consumption/production patterns, to be considered by each session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, might best be dealt with by selected case studies.

43. The Subcommittee, in emphasizing the importance of reporting and debate at the General Assembly under the expanded agenda item entitled "Oceans and the law of the sea", reiterated the advice found in paragraphs 15 and 16 of the report of the Subcommittee on its fourth session (ACC/1996/8) as reproduced below:

44. "The Subcommittee took note of paragraph 2 (a) of document E/CN.17/1996/L.20 and expressed its willingness to undertake the coordination of a periodic review of the marine environment and related issues, as described in chapter 17 of Agenda 21. Recognizing that a decision on that matter would be taken in 1997 by the General Assembly at its special session, the Subcommittee offered the guidance set out below to ACC, through IACSD, concerning how such a review could be most effectively carried out, and requested that those views be taken into account when the future work programme of the Commission was considered (para. 15)."

45. "As to the scope of the review, the Subcommittee felt strongly that it should focus on chapter 17 and should address a selected number of issues that, based upon an ongoing analysis of trends in implementation, needed to be brought to the attention of Governments at the General Assembly for appropriate action. So that the review could reflect the experience and concern of Governments as expressed in the governing and regional subsidiary bodies of the United Nations system, the Subcommittee encouraged its members to ensure the inclusion of an appropriate agenda item at forthcoming sessions of such bodies. Emphasis should be given to identifying gaps and proposing solutions to problems encountered in implementation, especially concerning the mobilization of necessary resources, for consideration by the Commission and transmittal to the General Assembly. The Subcommittee noted that the annual report to the General Assembly on the Law of the Sea would provide an opportunity for advising Governments on emerging trends, and recommended that the proposed periodic review of all aspects of the marine environment and related issues be considered by the General Assembly every three to five years under the agenda item 'Oceans and the Law of the Sea' (para 16)."

H. Arrangements for the seventh session including the inter-sessional work plan of the Subcommittee and its methods of work

46. The Subcommittee agreed that its next inter-sessional work plan and the draft agenda for its seventh session would include as priority items: United Nations ocean atlas; International Year of the Ocean, 1998; review of implementation planning for GPA; reporting to the Commission on Sustainable Development.

47. Taking into account its future work plan and the need for continuity in the period 1998-1999 during preparation and presentation of the report of the Secretary-General on oceans and seas, the Subcommittee recommended for approval by IACSD: (a) that its seventh session be held during the week of 25 January 1999 at the IAEA Marine Environment Laboratory in Monaco; and (b) that the present Chair and Vice-Chair should continue their functions through 31 December 1999. The Subcommittee also forecast the need for an

informal session, including a joint informal session with the ACC Subcommittee on Water Resources, and tentatively planned such a meeting for the month of August 1998 in The Hague, hosted by UNEP.

I. Other matters

48. The Subcommittee expressed its gratitude to G. Kullenberg, Executive Secretary of IOC, for his constructive contribution to the work of the Subcommittee since its first meeting and welcomed his promise to contribute to the work of the Subcommittee in his new capacity after retirement from UNESCO this year at the end of April.

49. Taking into account the need for continuity during preparation and presentation of the report of the Secretary-General on oceans and seas in 1998-1999, the Subcommittee recommended for approval by IACSD that the present Chair and Vice-Chair should continue their functions through 31 December 1999.

J. Adoption of the report

50. The Subcommittee adopted the report on its sixth session.

Notes

[1] A/51/116, annex II.

[2] Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992, vol. I, Resolutions Adopted by the Conference (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

[3] Official Records of the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea, vol. XVII (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.84.V.3), document A/CONF.62/122.

[4] Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 25 (A/52/25), annex, decision 19/14 A.

Annex I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Chairperson: T. Melvasalo
(United Nations Environment Programme)

Vice-Chairperson: I. Steiner
(United Nations)

Secretary: N. Philippon-Tulloch
(Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization)

United Nations, its entities and programmes

United Nations	A. Rogers* I. Steiner
United Nations Environment Programme	T. Melvasalo O. Vidal

Specialized agencies and related organizations

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	H. Naeve
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	G. Kullenberg
Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission	G. Kullenberg
World Meteorological Organization	F. Guzman
International Maritime Organization	O. Khalimonov
International Atomic Energy Agency	H. Livingston

* Focal point for Subcommittee activities within the United Nations Secretariat.

Annex II

AGENDA

1. Opening of the session.

2. Agenda, timetable and documentation.

3. Cooperative action:

   3.1. International Year of the Ocean, 1998;

   3.2. United Nations ocean atlas;

   3.3. Inter-agency review of implementation planning for the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities;

   3.4. Collaboration between the ACC Subcommittees on Oceans and Coastal Areas and on Water Resources;

   3.5. Preparation of reports.

4. Arrangements for the seventh session, including the inter-sessional work plan of the Subcommittee and its methods of work:

   4.1 Time and place of the seventh session;

   4.2 Inter-sessional work plan;

   4.3 Working methods.

5. Other matters.

6. Report and closure.

Annex III

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

Title	Document code
Agenda	ACC-SC/21.17.VI/1
Annotated provisional agenda	ACC-SC/21.17.VI/2
Timetable	ACC-SC/21.17.VI/3
List of documents	ACC-SC/21.17.VI/4
List of participants	ACC-SC/21.17.VI/5
United Nations ocean atlas: progress report from FAO	ACC-SC/21.17.VI/6
The United Nations 1998 International Year of the Ocean: progress report from IOC	ACC-SC/21.17.VI/7
IYO home page	ACC-SC/21.17.VI/7 Add.
Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities: progress report from UNEP	ACC-SC/21.17.VI/8
Reports to the Commission on Sustainable Development and to the United Nations General Assembly; background note from the United Nations	ACC-SC/21.17.VI/9

Information and other reference documents

Minutes of the informal meeting of the ACC Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas (Stockholm, 6-8 August 1997)	ACC-SC/21.17.VI/Inf.1
Minutes of the joint informal meeting of the ACC Subcommittees on Oceans and Coastal Areas and on Water Resources (Stockholm, 12 and 13 August 1997)	ACC-SC/21.17.VI/Inf.2
Resolutions adopted by United Nations bodies in support of the GPA	ACC-SC/21.17.VI/Inf.3
Report of the ACC Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas on its fifth session	ACC/1997/3
UNESCO press kit: planet ocean	
Proposed programme for the 1998 International Year of the Ocean	29C/15

Annex IV

STATEMENT ON EL NIÑO

1. The Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas wishes to draw to the attention of the Inter-Agency Task Force on El Niño the fact that there appears to be a very strong need to communicate with decision makers, planners, managers and economists, about the available scientific understanding, modelling, observations and forecasting of the El Niño phenomenon, together with an explanation of what this information and understanding means, and how it can be used in addressing many of the issues involved so as to help mitigate impacts and protect human life and resources.

2. In order to achieve this, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), among others, propose to combine efforts to organize a joint meeting, as a contribution to the 1998 IYO programme, that brings together scientists, economists, modellers of El Niño, ocean/atmosphere observers, planners, decision makers and managers.

3. Participants are to come from the relevant countries and sectors through invitations. The meeting could possibly be held in the Pacific region, some time in the middle or last half of 1998. National and subregional reports, together with overview background papers, should be prepared before and used as working material for the meeting.

4. The meeting should result in an assessment of the present understanding of the El Niño phenomenon, the applicability or usefulness of the available forecasting, the adequacy of existing operational observing system, with identification of gaps in applications, uses, communications, user and information mechanisms at the national, subregional or regional level, and suggestions for remedies.

Annex V

FRAMEWORK FOR AN INTEGRATED REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE OCEAN, 1998 (IYO)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In accordance with previous discussion by the Subcommittee, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) is endeavouring to generate public and governmental awareness of the International Year of the Ocean, 1998, notably through a Dedicated Programme, within which member State and agency activities and events have been included.

2. During the nineteenth session of the IOC Assembly (Paris, 2-18 July 1997), discussion under the IYO agenda item demonstrated keen interest by member States in the proposed programme. Most of the 62 speakers provided information regarding plans at the national level for activities to be dedicated to IYO. As these are confirmed, they are being included on the IOC home page. The programme will continue to evolve during 1998 and new material can be added throughout the year. The objectives of the IYO will continue beyond 1998 and, with this perspective, the following considerations are prepared as a framework for an integrated report on results and implications.

II. OBJECTIVES AND HOW TO ACHIEVE THEM

3. The overall objectives and framework within which they can be achieved so as to form an integrated whole may be as follows:

4. A major objective is to obtain a commitment on the part of Governments, decision makers and the population at large to give adequate attention to ocean issues. This should lead to provision of sufficient resources so as to ensure a proper management of ocean resources and the marine and coastal environments at the level they deserve as very large but finite economic assets.

5. In order to achieve this commitment we also need to address the subsequent points, forming a strategy for implementation:

Understanding the ocean

6. This includes several of the planned symposia, conferences and public awareness actions. The programmes aim at investigating the ocean and its resources, quantification of uncertainties, provision of facts and models for management, and forecasting changes in the ocean and coastal zone environments.

Observing the ocean

7. This includes systems like the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS), parts of the Global Climate Observing System (GCOS), the Global Terrestrial

Observation System (GTOS), the Integrated Global Ocean Services System (IGOSS), the Global Sea Level Observing System (GLOSS) and so forth; ship-routing; fisheries observations; and the presentation of data, for example, through the United Nations ocean atlas, CD-ROMs and so forth. The linkage to "understanding the ocean" is obvious since the data/observations are needed for forecasting, together with computer capability and facilities, remote sensing and in situ observations, communication technology and data assimilation. The cost-benefit needs to be demonstrated, for example, through forecasting of El Niño, drought, storm surges and so on.

8. Several projects are under way, including the United Nations ocean atlas, the Global Oceanographic Data Archaeology and Rescue Project (GODAR), El Niño response, also in relation to the General Assembly resolution. These can also serve as benchmarks for implementation of joint efforts.

Realizing what the ocean means to life on our planet

9. This includes most of the public awareness actions; education and training programmes, EXPO'98 efforts. The regional programmes also fit into this section since they, inter alia, aim at showing the significance of the ocean resources and exclusive economic zones (EEZs) for the countries of the regions. Inter-agency cooperative efforts bring out the importance of these for all sectors of the society. The assessment work also falls within this section, including Global International Waters Assessment (GIWA)-Global Environment Facility (GEF), Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Pollution (GESAMP)-Marine Environment Assessment (MEA) and the IOC-International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU)-Scientific Committee on the Protection of the Environment (SCOPE)-Scientific Committee on Oceanic Research (SCOR) science assessments. Clearly, these actions also draw on the previous sections. The assessments may also serve as benchmarks for implementation.

Managing the ocean

10. Most ocean management problems include proper management of human activities on land and at sea, including those at the coastal interface in both cases. Inputs of pollutants are mainly from land-based activities. Fisheries management is a question of managing the fisheries industry and so on. The various actions during IYO, 1998, should also bring this out. Frameworks for the ocean management section are also provided by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and United Nations Conference on Environment and Development results and follow-up, including the fisheries agreement, the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities and other conventions.

11. The inter-agency work contributes to formulations, agreements and implementations. This can be brought out in the presentations. Input to the report of the Secretary-General to the Commission on Sustainable Development for 1999 also falls within this section.

12. Follow-up to IYO, 1998, likewise falls herein, for example, through the presentation of results, through the Commission on Sustainable Development and so on, with specifications from the inter-agency cooperative mechanisms, such as the ACC Subcommittee, GESAMP, the Inter-Secretariat Committee on Programmes related to Oceanography (ICSPRO) and joint programmes. As an example: how did the El Niño forecast work? was it used? why not?

Follow-up and reporting

13. This may be considered a separate action so as to ensure that there is an agreed reporting schedule and framework, with identified lead agencies for identified actions, taking into account the reporting functions of the Subcommittee and related intergovernmental review, notably within the context of the seventh session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

14. Using the impetus of IYO during 1998 and beyond to achieve common goals may include consideration of how to identify impacts, indicators, benchmarks; and of how to report jointly on experiences to the Commission on Sustainable Development, or directly to the General Assembly.

Annex VI

ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF THE GPA STEERING COMMITTEE ON TECHNICAL COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE FOR THE GLOBAL PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT FROM LAND-BASED ACTIVITIES**

I. FUNCTIONS OF THE ACC SUBCOMMITTEE ON OCEANS AND COASTAL AREAS AS A GPA STEERING COMMITTEE

1. It is herewith proposed that the main role of the GPA Steering Committee would be to facilitate the provision of the necessary inputs to the GPA intergovernmental review meetings and, for this purpose, that the GPA Steering Committee could periodically review:

(a) Status of implementation of GPA at the national, regional and global levels;

(b) Experiences gained, problems encountered and assistance required for implementation of GPA;

(c) Plans for forthcoming periods (annual, biannual, medium-term, long-term);

(d) Roles and responsibilities of the individual partner agencies (including those composing the Steering Committee) in supporting implementation of GPA, with specific reference to:

(i) Status of implementation of regional programmes of action to deal with impacts of land-based activities on the marine environment;

(ii) Status and updating of each source-category component of the data directory for the GPA clearing house, as envisaged in paragraphs 43-45 of GPA;

(e) Ways and means of facilitating an effective support to the implementation of GPA through strengthened cooperation between UNEP and its partner agencies;

(f) The modalities of Governments' participation in the process.

** The present document is a revised version of a working paper submitted by the Coordination Office of the Global Programme of Action, Water Branch of UNEP, to the informal meeting of the ACC Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas (Stockholm, 6-8 August 1997), and incorporates the outcome of the discussions on that meeting, the outcome of the informal joint meeting of the ACC Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas and the ACC Subcommittee on Water Resources (Stockholm, 12 and 13 August 1997), and the discussions/agreements of the ACC Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas at its sixth session (Lisbon, 20-23 January 1998).

2. In addition, working with and through the expert groups created for each source-category, the GPA Steering Committee will coordinate the basic design and structure of the data directory of the clearing house, as well as its linkages to information-delivery mechanisms. The GPA Steering Committee also will be responsible for establishing a common format for individual source-category components and for cross-referencing among components.

3. The above activities appropriately consider the designation of lead organizations for the development and updating of each source-category component of the data directory (see General Assembly resolution 51/189), with the goal of identifying the appropriate mix of information-delivery systems and means of facilitating the use of the clearing house by States and regions. These categories, and the lead agencies designated by Governments (Assembly resolution 51/189) and their responsibilities, are as listed below:

(a) Sewage - World Health Organization (WHO);

(b) Persistent organic pollutants - Inter-Organizational Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals, International Programme on Chemical Safety and Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety;

(c) Heavy metals - United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in cooperation with the Inter-Organizational Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals;

(d) Radioactive substances - International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA);

(e) Nutrients and sediment mobilization - Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO);

(f) Oils (hydrocarbons) and litter - International Maritime Organization (IMO);

(g) Physical alterations, including habitat modification and destruction of areas of concern - UNEP.

4. Subsequent to the adoption of General Assembly resolution 51/189, member States of UNESCO-IOC endorsed the agency's participation in the GPA implementation and the follow-up to the Assembly resolution. UNESCO-IOC expressed interest in cooperating with the agencies designated to take the lead in developing the clearing house source-categories for oils (hydrocarbons) and litter (IMO), and nutrients and sediment mobilization (FAO).

5. As of 22 January 1998, only WHO, IAEA and UNESCO-IOC had adopted resolutions in support of GPA. WHO and IMO expressed their inability to undertake the role of leading coordination of their respective source categories without additional financial resources being provided. FAO indicated that the matter of its participation in the clearing house should be brought before the FAO Council, and that it would be premature to say precisely when endorsement might occur. Since the FAO Council's agenda for its November 1997 session had already been set, the next occasion during which this matter can be considered by the Council is its November 1988 session.

II. FUNCTIONS OF THE ACC SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER RESOURCES, IN COLLABORATION WITH THE ACC SUBCOMMITTEE ON OCEANS AND COASTAL AREAS IN THE GPA STEERING COMMITTEE (PENDING FURTHER CONSULTATIONS WITH THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER RESOURCES)

6. GPA emphasized that effective development and implementation of programmes of action to address the impacts of land-based activities must focus on sustainable, pragmatic and integrated environmental management approaches and processes, such as integrated coastal area management, harmonized with river basin management and land-use plans. It further stressed that, in the process of establishing priorities for action and through all stages of developing and implementing programmes of action, States should, inter alia, recognize the basic linkages between the freshwater and marine environment, through application of watershed management approaches that also consider downstream coastal areas.

7. In furthering the above, within the GPA regional workshops being organized by UNEP, special attention has been drawn to the need for an integrated approach for the development of national and regional programmes of action that not only encompass concern for the marine and coastal environment, but also take into account the protection of associated river basins.

8. The functions of the ACC Subcommittee on Water Resources, in collaboration with the ACC Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas in the GPA Steering Group, could include:[a]

(a) Reviewing freshwater-related issues in regard to paragraph 1 (a)-(f) above;

(b) Contributing to developing and updating the relevant source-category components of the data directory for the GPA clearing house, along the lines specified in paragraphs 2 and 3 above (through joint experts working groups);

(c) Contributing to ongoing and planned relevant assessments (for example, the Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Pollution (GESAMP) global assessment of land-based sources and activities affecting the quality and uses of the marine, coastal and associated freshwater environment; Global International Waters Assessment[b]);

(d) Promoting appropriate linkages between international freshwater and marine agreements.

III. FUNCTIONS OF EACH UNITED NATIONS AGENCY WITH RESPONSIBILITIES RELATED TO GPA IMPLEMENTATION

9. The specific roles of the agencies in facilitating implementation of GPA, as provided by each agency, will be updated by UNEP and presented to the GPA Steering Committee for periodic review.

IV. FUNCTIONS OF REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS WITH A PRIMARY ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY IN IMPLEMENTATION OF GPA TO BE REPRESENTED IN THE GPA STEERING COMMITTEE

10. A preliminary list of potential regional and international organizations to be invited to participate in the meetings of the GPA Steering Committee and their potential roles and inputs are detailed in annexes II and VI of the GPA implementation plan.

V. TENTATIVE WORK PLAN AND TIMETABLE

GPA Steering Committee[c]

11. The annual meetings of the ACC Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas will also take into account its role as the GPA Steering Committee. In addition, any needed ad hoc meetings of the ACC Subcommittee related to GPA will be organized by the GPA Coordination Office in cooperation with the ACC Subcommittee secretariat. These ad hoc meetings could encompass participation of interested Governments, United Nations organizations and relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. Participants are expected to submit reports on the relevant activities to these meetings. The meetings are as follows:

(a) Ad hoc joint meeting of the ACC Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas and ACC Subcommittee on Water Resources:[d]

(i) Dates: August 1998;

(ii) Venue: The Hague or Stockholm;

(iii) Purpose: To consider, inter alia:

a. Functions of the ACC Subcommittee on Water Resources in facilitating implementation of GPA;

b. How Governments may be involved in, or contribute to, the activities of the GPA Steering Committee;

c. How regional and international organizations, including non-governmental organizations, may contribute to facilitation of implementation of GPA;

d. Outcomes of the regional technical workshops on implementation of GPA, organized by UNEP in cooperation with relevant regional organizations;

e. Planned or existing regional programmes of action (including work plan and timetables) dealing with land-based activities, and the assistance required for their implementation;

f. Status of the GPA clearing house mechanism;

g. Exchange of information on experience gained in the development and implementation of national, subregional and regional programmes to control the effects of land-based activities;

(b) Seventh session of the ACC Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas;

(c) Seventh session of the ACC Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas:

(i) Dates: January 1999;

(ii) Venue: Monaco.

GPA clearing house

Relevant meeting under this heading is as follows:

(a) Dates: May/July 1998;

(b) Venue: Geneva or The Hague;

(c) Purpose: Technical meeting to review, inter alia:

(i) Progress in development of the clearing house;

(ii) Participation of lead agencies for source-categories (as per General Assembly resolution 51/189);

(iii) Follow-up to recommendations of the first clearing house technical meeting;

(iv) Future activities.

GPA relevant assessments

Twenty-eighth session of GESAMP:

(a) Dates: 20-24 April 1998;

(b) Venue: World Meteorological Organization, Geneva;

(c) Purpose: To consider, inter alia:

(i) First draft of the global review on land-based sources and activities affecting the quality of the marine, coastal and associated freshwater environment;

(ii) Plans for preparation of a report on the state of the marine environment.

GPA regional workshops[e]

Workshops information is as follows:

(a) Caribbean: Kingston, Jamaica, mid-May 1998;

(b) South Pacific: Apia, Western Samoa, mid-1998;

(c) South-West Atlantic: Brasilia, Brazil, mid-late 1998;

(d) Northwest Pacific: Tokyo, Japan, late 1998.

GPA intergovernmental review meeting

Meeting information is as follows:

(a) Dates: Early 2000 (possibly in conjunction with eighth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development);

(b) Purpose: Review status of GPA implementation.

Notes

[a] Additional functions can be identified from a list of United Nations water-related activities that the Economic and Social Council requested of the ACC Subcommittee on Water Resources for the sixth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, including reporting by categories on activities and financial resources.

[b] Global International Waters Assessment (GIWA) is particularly relevant to the GPA because it combines freshwater and marine issues, focusing on water scarcity, pollution, overfishing/overexploitation of living resources, habitat destruction and global changes.

[c] Followed by inter-sessional work coordinated by the GPA Coordination Office in cooperation with the ACC Subcommittee secretariat, as agreed during the meetings.

[d] Dates and venue are tentative pending further consultations with the ACC Subcommittee on Water Resources.

[e] For details, see paras. 37-39 of the GPA implementation plan.